**Remarks/Arguments**

Reconsideration of this application is requested.

Claims 1-3 and 5-20 have been rejected by the Examiner under 35 USC § 103(a) for being unpatentable over U.S. Publication No. 2003/0101147 to Montgomery et. al.

The Examiner stated the following in pages 4 and 5 of the Final Rejection. Montgomery et al does disclose a tracking information database 456 for storing each tracking 10 that has been issued to an end user computer 308 and the postage information associated with each tracking 10... and periodically retrieving postage information from the tracking information database 456 for transmission to the master tracking computer system 310. Therefore, it would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made for Montgomery et al to retrieve the identification code from the data center and the identification code read by the post office since the delivery status are updated after the mail pieces is read by the postal authority, and it would be necessary for the postal authority to retrieve the identification code in order to update the delivery status.

Montgomery discloses the following in paragraph 0101.

[0101] In addition to the previously described components, the centralized postage-issuing computer system 307 comprises a local memory 452, which in addition to the previously described databases, stores a tracking ID database 454 of pre-stored unassigned tracking ID's received by the master tracking computer system 310, and a tracking. information database 456 for storing each tracking ID that has been issued to an end user computer 308 and the postage information associated with each tracking ID, i.e., the information contained in the tracking ID request. The centralized postage-issuing computer system 307 further comprises a set of postage dispensing modules 458, which in addition to the previously described modules, includes a tracking ID allocation module 460 in place of the tracking ID request module 438, and a database management module 462 in place of the database management module 436. The tracking ID allocation module 460 is configured for allocating unique tracking ID's from the tracking ID database 454 to the end user computers 308 in response to receiving tracking ID requests from the end user computers 308. In addition to performing the afore-described functions, the database management module 462 is further configured for storing pools of unassigned tracking ID's within the tracking ID database 454 as

they are periodically received by the master tracking computer system 310, and for periodically retrieving postage information from the tracking information database 456 for transmission to the master tracking computer system 310.

Montgomery discloses a tracking information database 456 for storing each tracking ID that has been issued to an end user computer 308 and the postage information associated with each traciking ID, i.e., the information contained in the tracking ID request.

Montgomery discloses the following in paragraph 0184.

"[0184] At step 1204, the postage transaction information, along with the tracking ID's and associated delivery status, is recorded. Specifically, the database management module 1136 stores the postage transaction information in the postage database 1130. At step 1206, the multitude of mail pieces are processed through the postal authority, which in this case, is the USPS. At step 1208, the postal authority, upon delivery of the mail pieces to their intended destination, reads the tracking ID's on the mail pieces. At step 1210, this delivery information is transmitted to and recorded in the master tracking computer system 390. Specifically, the database management module 1178 updates the confirmatory delivery status information in the tracking information database 1172 by changing the status from "accepted" to "delivered.""

Montgomery discloses the use of tracking ID's to facilitate the refunding of unused postage. The delivery status for duplicate postage transactions can then be reviewed to determine whether the mail pieces associated with these postage transactions have been delivered.

The Examiner stated the following in page 5 of the Final Rejection.

Montgomery et al does not expressly disclose printing at the postage meter a certificate indicating that the identification code has been read by the post office. However, Montgomery does disclose that the status of the mailpiece is update by the central computer, and the status can be checked on a webpage (Fig 27). Therefore, at the minimum the status webpage can be printed to indicate that the identification code has been read by the post office. It would have been obvious at the time of the invention for Montgomery et al to substitute printing the webpage at anywhere a printer is available with printing the webpage at the postage meter. Since printing a webpage and

printing at a postage meter are well known in the arts, the simple substitution of one known element for another producing a predictable result renders the claim obvious.

Montgomery discloses the following in paragraph 0175.

> [0175] A refund inquiry can also be in the form of an audit review of all postage transactions in a user account. FIG. 27 illustrates exemplary results of an audit review. The account administrator can review the list of postage transactions for duplicate postage transactions. Once a duplicate postage transaction is suspected, the account administrator can click "Get Status" to determine if the mail piece associated with either of the duplicate postage transactions has been delivered. A refund inquiry can also be in the form of a refund pattern audit. FIG. 28 illustrates exemplary results of a refund pattern audit performed on the customers of a particular postage vendor. As can be seen, the account administrator can determine the refund percentage (by piece and total postage amount) of each customer.

Montgomery discloses an audit or refund procedural that is used once duplicate postage transaction is suspected. An Account Administration can click "Get Status" to determine if the mail piece associated with either the duplicate postage transaction has duplicate postage transaction has been delivered.

Montgomery does not disclose or anticipate steps e and g of claim 1 as amended and those claims dependent thereon, namely (e) retrieving the identification code from the data center and the identification code read by the post office and (g) printing at the postage meter a certificate indicating that the identification code has been read by the post office to provide proof of mailing the mail piece having the identification code.

Applicant's printed postage meter certificate may be used to provide proof of mailing the mail piece having the identification code. The certificate then may be used as legal proof that the mail piece was processed by the post. This is important in many instances where the mailer must prove that a mail piece was sent to recipient i.e. insurance notices, contractual provisions, other legal notices etc.

Currently the mailer has to go to the post to obtain a physical certificate that the post processed the mail piece. In applicants claimed invention the physical certificate may be obtained by the mailer without going to the post. The post is not open 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Thus, mailers would be able to obtain proof of mailing every hour of the day and seven days a week.

Claim 21 has been rejected by the Examiner under 35 USC § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Montgomery in view of Ng U.S. Patent 5,174,398.

The Examiner stated the following in pages 9 and 10 of the Final Rejection.

Montgomery et al disclose a plurality of type of service levels that a user can select for a mail piece. [0080] Montgomery et al does not expressly disclose that registered mail is a service level that can be selected.

Ng discloses many mail service levels can be selected, such as registered mail. (col. 1: lines 15-18).

Therefore, it would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made for Montgomery et al to include registered mail as a service level that a user can select for a mail piece since the claimed invention is merely combination of old elements, and in the combination each element merely would have performed the same function as it did separately, and one ordinary skill in the art would have recognized that the results of the combination were predictable.

Montgomery discloses the following in paragraph 0080.

> [0080] Like the prior art envelope 102 shown in FIG. 1, the label 200 shown in FIG. 2 carries a self-validating unique postage indicium 204 that is presented in a two-dimensional barcode 206 containing data relating to the mail piece on which the label 200 is applied, as well as human-readable information 208, return address 212, destination address 214, and POSTNET barcode 216. Noteworthy, is that Facing Identification Marks (FIM) are not located on the label 200, since the FIM is only a requirement for letter mail and has no value in the processing of packages. The label 200 further includes a standard unique tracking ID 218 at its center. The tracking ID 218 is presented in an associated computer readable form (such as, e.g., a one-dimensional barcode 220), and as alpha-numerical data 222, in this case, the number "0180 5213 9070 2211 5878." Up to this point, a typical USPS label, which can be used to provide tracking capability for mere administrative purposes, has been described. For example, in the USPS environs, one can obtain a delivery confirmation code for Priority Mail, an Express Mail tracking code for Express Mail, a Signature Confirmation code for Priority Mail, and a delivery confirmation code for media mail. Similar tracking ID's are used by other carriers (such as, e.g., UPS, and FedEx), as well as other postal authorities worldwide. Tracking numbers may also be added to First Class mail in the future, and are used in such ancillary services at Certified Mail.

Ng discloses the following in col. 1, lines 9-26.

> Postage scales and meters are commonplace in mail rooms everywhere. Such postage systems have become ever more sophisticated in their ability to provide a large variety of services to a user. For example, many postage systems today weigh an article, provide a user with a selection of postage options (such as first class, express mail, and the like). The user selects the desired mail service from the various options. The user then selects from optional services (registered mail and the like) and enters the destination of the item via a zip or zone code. From the above information the postage scale indicates the postage amount needed and/or issues postage for the required amount. U.S. Pat. Nos. 4,484,307 (Quatse et al.), 4,644,142 (Payn), and 4,742,469 (Haines) (all assigned to the assignee of the present invention) disclose postage systems with representative features and are incorporated herein by reference for all purposes.

Ng discloses using a postage scale and a postage meter for determining the cost of mailing a mailpiece by registered mail.

Montgomery and/or Ng taken separating or together do not disclose or anticipate obtaining from a postage meter a certificate indicating the mailer selected a service level for the mail piece to be registered mail that has been read by the Post Office.

In view of the above claims 1-3, 5-19, and 21 are patentable. If the Examiner has any questions would the Examiner please call the undersigned at the telephone number noted below.

Please charge any additional fees that may be required or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account Number 16-1885.

Respectfully submitted,

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